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INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 000419

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL ZM

SUBJECT: HELPING ZIMBABWE NO EASY TASK

REF: (A) USUN 404 (B) STATE 44297 (C) 44905

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. USUN's soundings of the UN Secretariat and UKUN show a common frustration about how best to assist Zimbabwe. The UN's elections division is prepared to immediately deploy eminent persons to help calm fears and to deploy a full team of elections observers within weeks on Zimbabwe's request if time and resources were made available.

The British have urged Secretary-General Ban to name a special envoy or fact finding team, but the Secretariat to date insists that either proposal could be implemented only with the consent of Zimbabwe. Lacking necessary Security Council votes to call a special session, concerned members are left with the option of asking for Secretariat briefings in closed consultations and await developments on the ground to trigger such a request. Secretariat officials agreed to investigate our concerns about the job performance of UNDP ResRep Zacharias but made clear they do not share them. In light of the opposition's evident agreement to a runoff, post suggests Department consider a possible USG contribution to a UN-led election observer mission. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In recent days Ambassador Wolff, USUN ECOSOC Chief, Deputy PolCouns, and Poloffs have discussed USG Zimbabwe concerns (reftels) with UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs (DPA) Lynn Pascoe, DPA Assistant Secretary-General Angela Kane, Director of the Electoral Assistance Division Craig Jenness, UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert, DPA Africa I Team Leader Vallerie de Campos Mello, and senior officials of the UK and French missions.

¶3. (C) To Ambassador Wolff's urging that the UN consider fielding a fact-finding mission, U/SYG Pascoe and A/SYG Kane reiterated Pascoe's indication to the Council (Ref A) that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is prepared to lend his good offices to these or other efforts in coordination with the African Union and with the consent of the Government of Zimbabwe. Neither Pascoe nor Kane was sanguine that the AU or Zimbabwe was interested in either idea.

¶4. (C) UKUN counts eight votes on the Council in favor of a special public session on Zimbabwe (U.S., UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Panama, Costa Rica, Croatia), one short of the nine needed to convolve a meeting. (NOTE. Briefings in closed Council consultations by the Secretariat can be called by any member at any time. END NOTE.) UKUN therefore has instead urged SYG Ban to greater action, demarching him recently to request that he appoint a special envoy and a fact-finding mission (even in the face of certain Zimbabwe noncooperation) and that he prevail upon Latin American and Caribbean states to offer election observers after Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe evidently indicated that observers from these states would be acceptable. UKUN is hopeful that Mugabe might agree to a small percentage of other nationals in a joint AU/UN elections observer mission. In the

meantime, Council President (for May) UK intends to monitor events on the ground with a view to calling for further closed briefings as appropriate.

¶15. (C) Deputy PolCouns discussed the range of potential UN elections observer assistance with Electoral Division Chief Jenness, who said the response of his office would be dictated by time, money, and Zimbabwe's cooperation. He said he could send eminent persons to Zimbabwe with the government's permission "virtually immediately." At the other end of the assistance spectrum, he said a full observer mission would comprise 120 people deployed over a period of three months. Recalling that the elections division depends on donor contributions, he said funding would have to be found on an ad hoc basis.

¶16. (C) Finally, USUN's ECOSOC Counselor met UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert and UNDP Director for Africa Gilbert Houngbo regarding ref B concerns about UNDP Zimbabwe ResRep Augustino Zacharias. Melkert confirmed that UN offices in Zimbabwe are on a "phase 2" security alert, but insisted that this does not restrict UN personnel to Harare and that the offices are "completely operational." Regarding a possible pro-Mugabe bias, Melkert said Zacharias enjoys the full confidence of his office and asked for further details of bias as alleged Ref B, para 10.

¶17. (C) COMMENT. In view of reports that Zimbabwe's opposition has agreed to a run-off election, which would almost certainly be delayed beyond the May 23 date technically mandated, Post suggests USG emphasis should also be on pushing Zimbabwe, directly and indirectly, to accept a robust team of election observers, to include a UN element. Pending

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development of an observer mission budget, Post suggests that Department preliminarily consider possibilities for a USG contribution. END COMMENT.

Khalilzad